

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE****Statement of Ranking Member Bennie G. Thompson*****Probing DHS's Botched Management of the Human Resources Information Technology Program***

February 25, 2016 (Washington) – Today, Committee on Homeland Security Ranking Member Bennie G. Thompson (D-MS) delivered the following prepared remarks for the Subcommittee on Oversight and Management Efficiency hearing entitled “Probing DHS’s Botched Management of the Human Resources Information Technology Program”:

“It is not shocking that the subject of today’s hearing is another acquisition failure at the Department. The Government Accountability Office has found that DHS has made little progress in implementing its Human Resources Information Technology Investment (HRIT). HRIT was created to consolidate, integrate, and modernize the department’s information technology infrastructure that supports human resources.

It is no secret that DHS has been plagued with acquisition failures. This Committee, in a bipartisan fashion, has exercised vigorous oversight over DHS acquisitions. The Committee has also produced bipartisan legislation on DHS acquisitions. Just this week, the House passed more common-sense legislation to reform DHS acquisitions. H.R. 4398, authored by the Ranking Member of this Subcommittee, requires regular reporting on the progress of DHS acquisitions to Congress. What I do find appalling is that the Department official ultimately responsible for both acquisition and human resource management at DHS is not appearing today.

Under Secretary Deyo, the Under Secretary for Management, has not appeared before the Committee since assuming his duties at DHS. Even though the Government Accountability Office has noted that management challenges at DHS are among the most serious programmatic risks facing the U.S. Government, the Under Secretary is not here to address GAO’s findings or receive questions from Members.

Today’s hearing involves significant concerns with respect to the management of DHS personnel, information technology, and acquisition actions all of which fall squarely within the Under Secretary’s responsibilities. The Department’s poor performance on the Office of Personnel Management’s Federal Employee View Point Survey underscores DHS’s human capital management challenges. Additionally, GAO introduced a new high risk area for DHS in its High Risk Update focused on “Improving the Management of IT Acquisitions and Operations”.

Unfortunately, the Department’s HRIT investment provides a glaring case-in-point: GAO’s report on HRIT provides the following box score for the program—after more than twelve years of sustained investment, no validated program baselines; uncertainty about the validity of requirements; virtually no capabilities fully delivered; and no complete accounting of program costs to date.

Finally, GAO’s report finds that an executive steering committee for HRIT--composed of senior DHS officials--met only once between September 2013 and June 2015. This Committee has seen too many cases of poor program discipline at DHS translating into acquisition programs beset by cost overruns and schedule delays. Mr. Chairman, I hope that today’s hearing offers a full record of the lapses that have left HRIT in its current predicament. I also hope that our witnesses will also explain the Department’s plan to recover value from the HRIT investment, and to reform DHS acquisition management.”

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